

Yevgeny Charushin



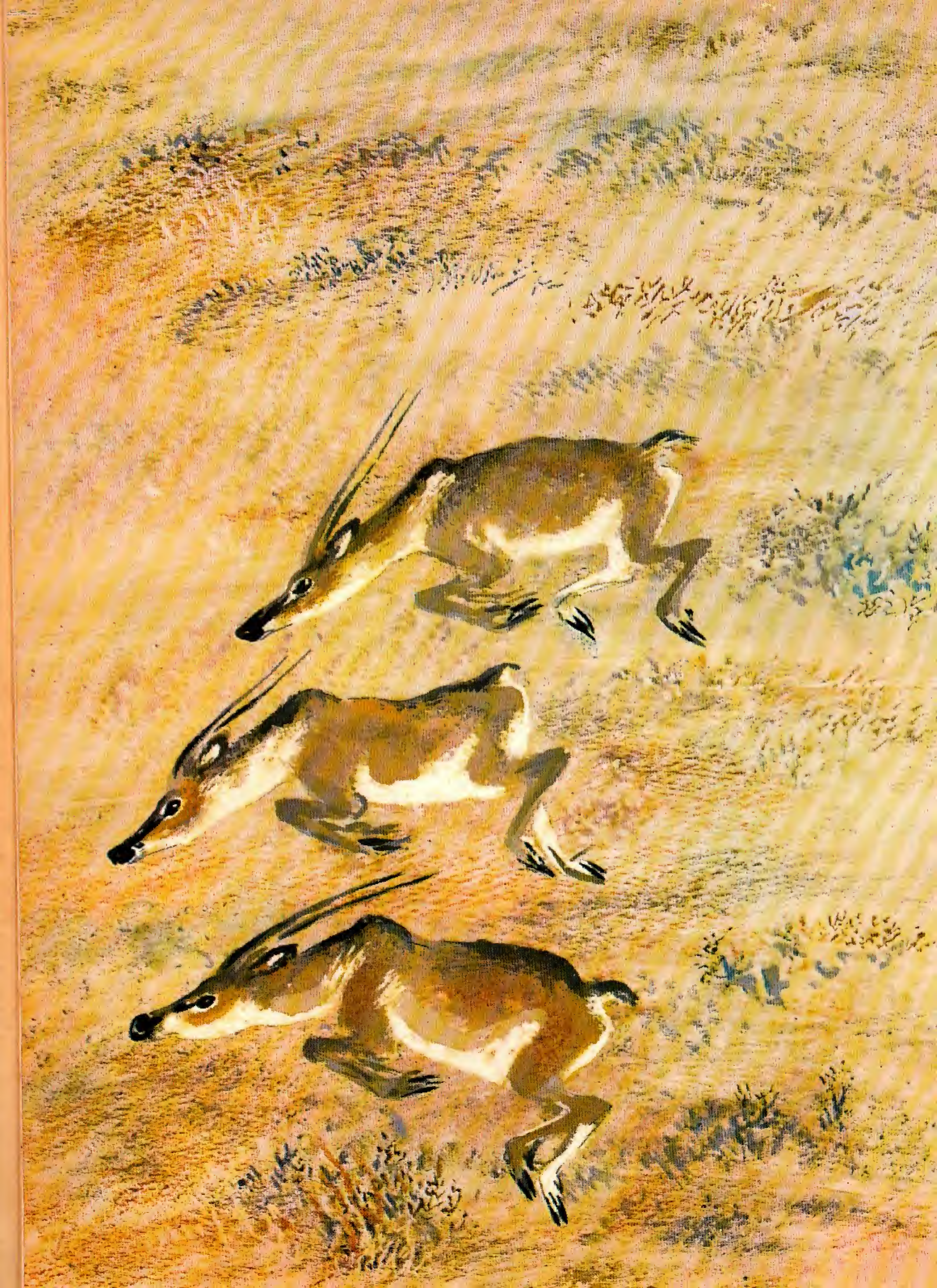
**MY ANIMAL
BOOK**





THE ANIMALS OF HOT AND COLD LANDS







LION

Zebras, you pretty striped horses, run for your lives! Antelopes, run as fast as you can! Buffaloes, take care!

The Lion is out hunting.

A roar, like a crash of thunder, rolls over the shrubs and thickets. And all the animals run for cover.

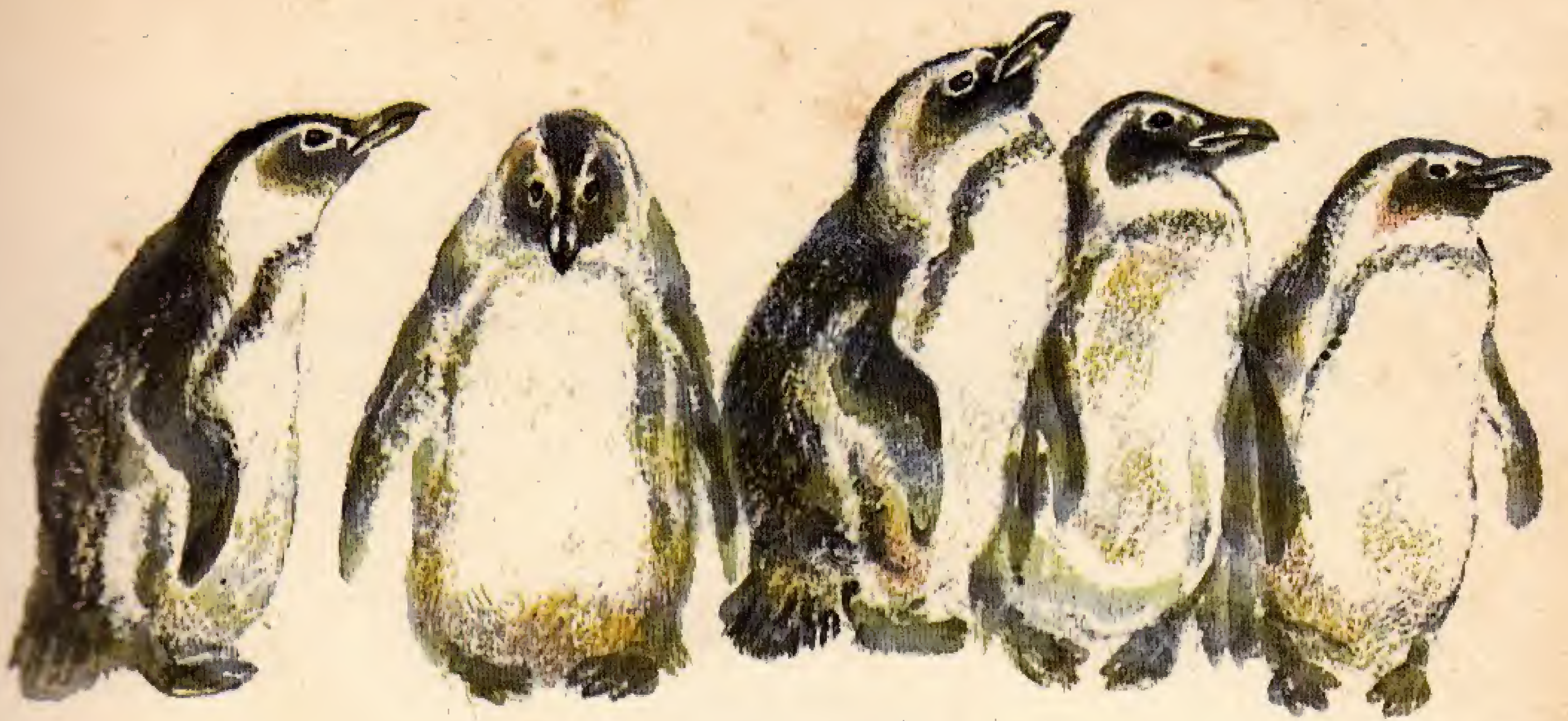
The Lion is the strongest and most dreaded animal of all. He has sharp claws and strong teeth.

Who will his victim be this time?



PENGUINS

Penguins are not like any other birds. They fly not in the air but in the water. They dive in and start flapping their short wings so hard that they can outrace a fish. They walk on the ground in a very funny way they have, holding themselves so upright that from afar they may easily be taken for gentlemen wearing tails and white waistcoats.

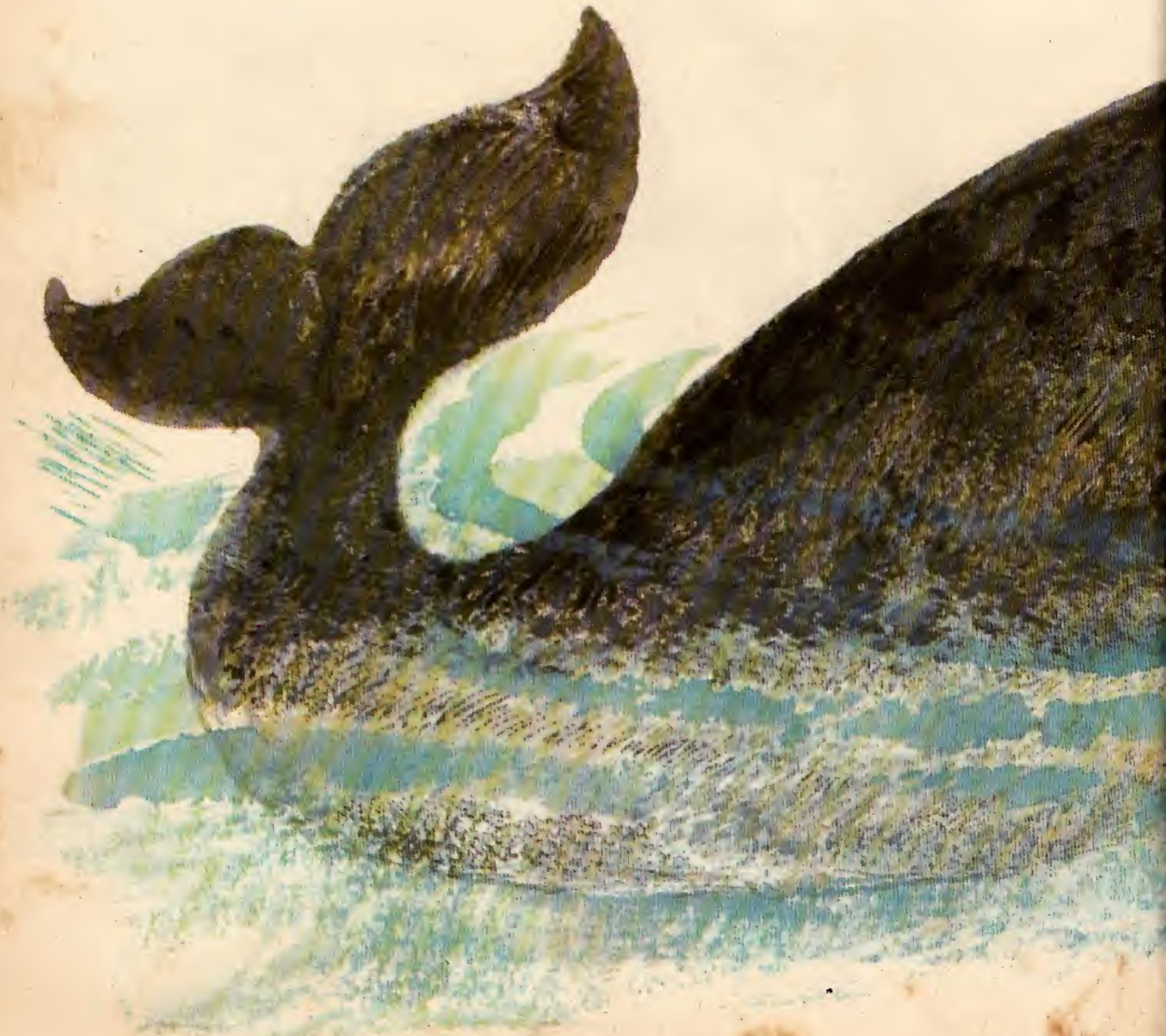


One day, a steamer drifted into strange, icy waters. The sailors sighted land in the distance, and as the steamer came closer they saw row upon row of people ranged along the shore. When they were quite near, all these people suddenly tumbled into the water—all together, to the last man! And only then the sailors guessed that they were penguins.

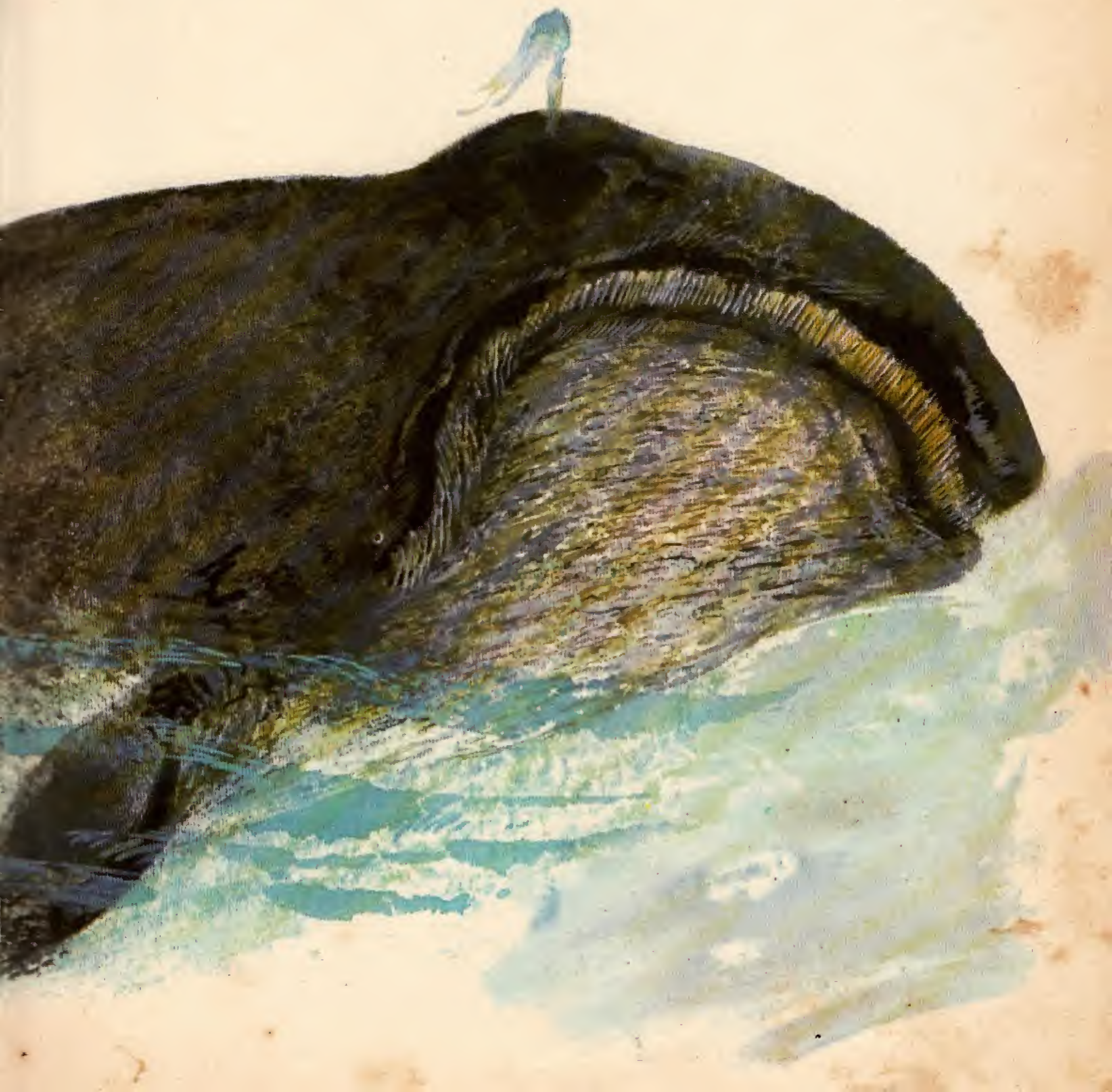
WHALE

The whale is the biggest animal in the world. It lives in the sea, and swims like a fish.

He goes after shoals of fish, and the chase might take him north, where there's nothing but ice and snow, or south, where it's hot the year round.



He takes a huge mouthful of water with a run of fish in it, strains, the water through his baleen, and keeps the fish to eat. In his upper jaw the whale has two rows of horny plates, and this is called the baleen or whalebone.



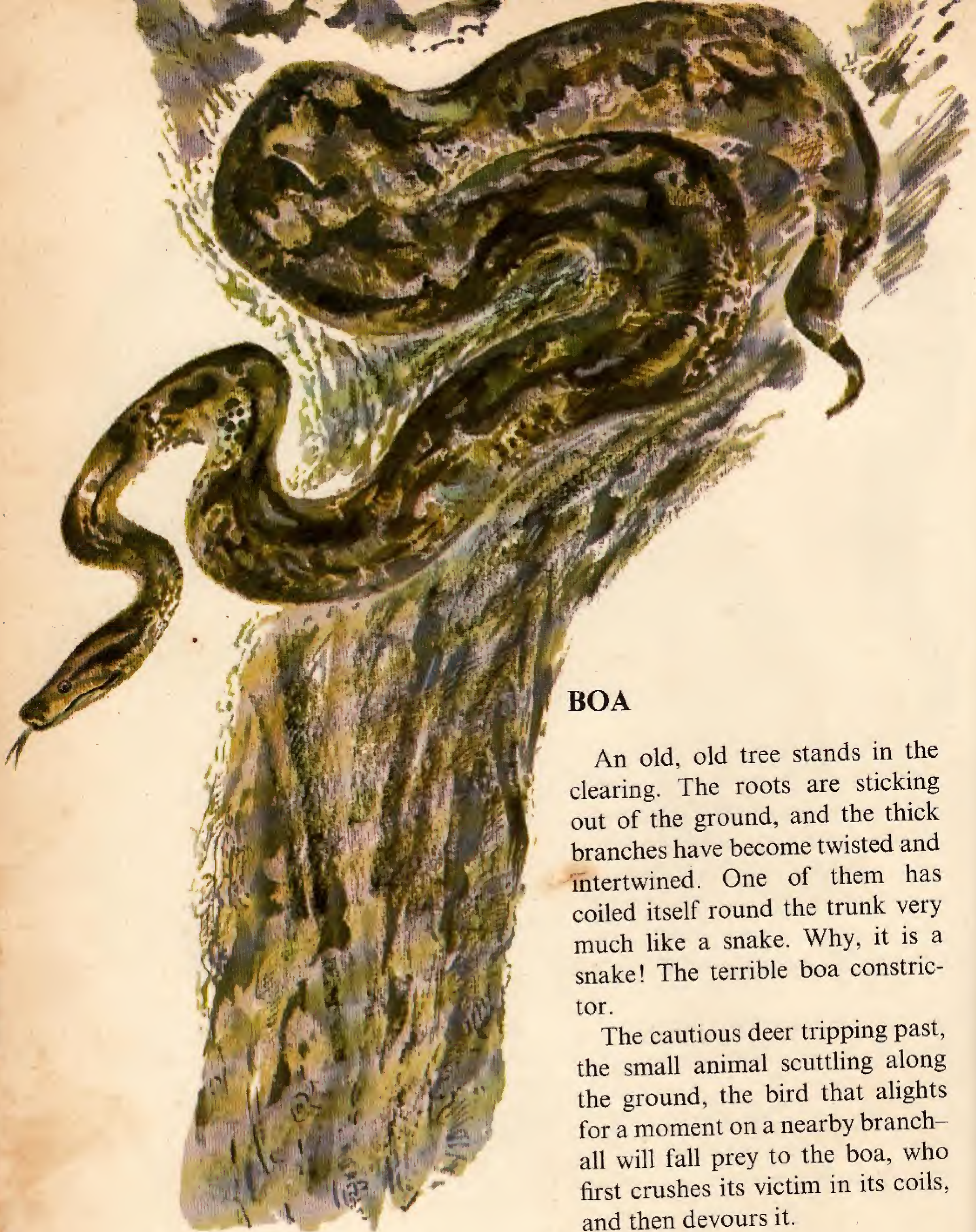
ELEPHANT

Not a twig cracks, not a leaf stirs, when the wild elephant steps into the open from the jungle thickets. He stands still, towering like a grey mountain. His legs are like tree trunks, his ears are like twin sails, and his strong tusks are curved and long. With his trunk he pulls up a whole shrub by the roots, stuffs it into his mouth and chews it slowly.

The elephant is so powerful that he does not have to fear anyone in the jungle.







BOA

An old, old tree stands in the clearing. The roots are sticking out of the ground, and the thick branches have become twisted and intertwined. One of them has coiled itself round the trunk very much like a snake. Why, it is a snake! The terrible boa constrictor.

The cautious deer tripping past, the small animal scuttling along the ground, the bird that alights for a moment on a nearby branch—all will fall prey to the boa, who first crushes its victim in its coils, and then devours it.



COCKATOO

The cockatoo sits on a branch in the forest and plays with its crest, folding and unfolding it like a fan. This parrot is awfully good at imitating all kinds of voices and sounds. Suddenly it will grunt like a wild boar in the bushes, growl like a beast in its lair, or whistle like a mocking bird.

It can also be taught to speak Russian, French, or any other language. But, of course, he won't know what he's talking about.

I once knew a cockatoo who could sing songs.



HIPPOPOTAMUS

The hippopotamus can hardly walk on his short, stumpy legs. The fat on him actually wobbles. He is so greedy he will eat up a whole meadow, and what he can't eat he will squash. After this big meal he goes down to river for a nap, basking in the warm water as if it were the softest of featherbeds. When he has rested, he begins to play. In the water he is not clumsy at all. He swims about, dives for weeds, growing on the bottom, and now and then opens wide his huge mouth that's like a gaping suitcase, and gives a sort of neigh—a sound it would take ten horses to produce.



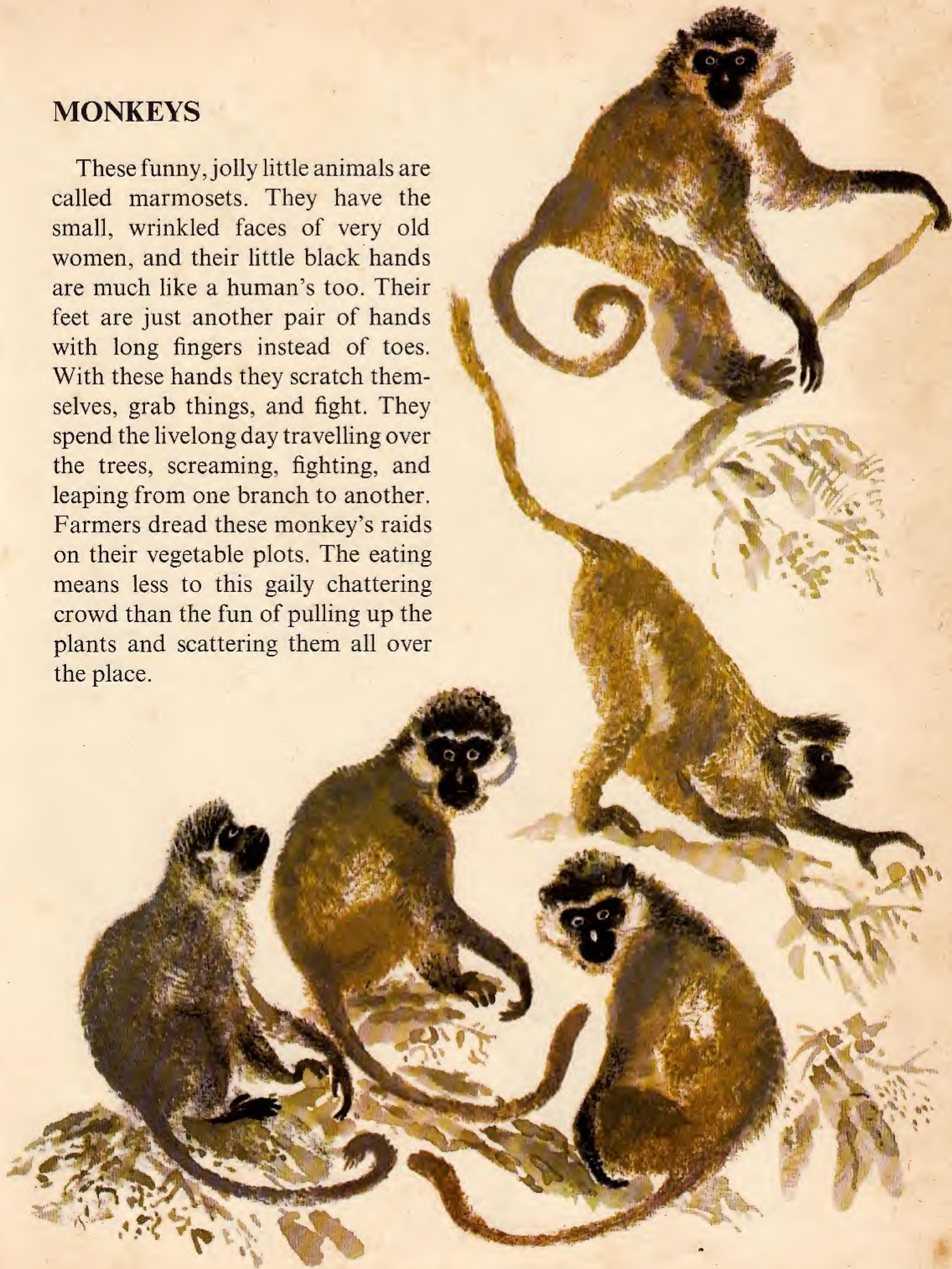
ORANGUTAN

The orangutan is a big ape with reddish-brown hair. In Malay the word orangutan means "man of the forest", and the Malaysians have a legend about him. Once upon a time, he was a human being and lived in a village. But he did not want to work, and went away into the jungle to live in trees. Reddish hair grew all over him, and he became an ape.



MONKEYS

These funny, jolly little animals are called marmosets. They have the small, wrinkled faces of very old women, and their little black hands are much like a human's too. Their feet are just another pair of hands with long fingers instead of toes. With these hands they scratch themselves, grab things, and fight. They spend the livelong day travelling over the trees, screaming, fighting, and leaping from one branch to another. Farmers dread these monkey's raids on their vegetable plots. The eating means less to this gaily chattering crowd than the fun of pulling up the plants and scattering them all over the place.





CROCODILE

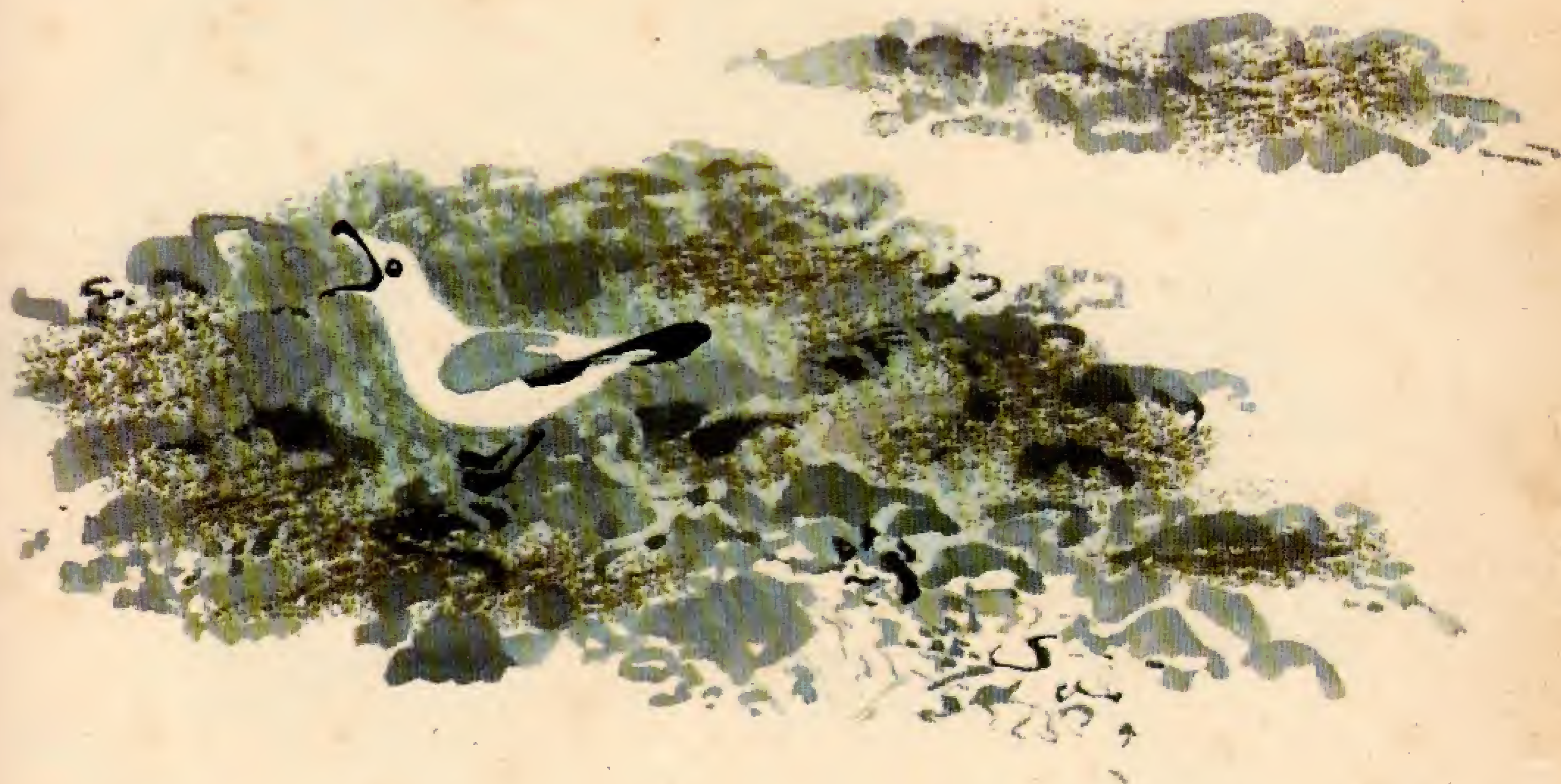
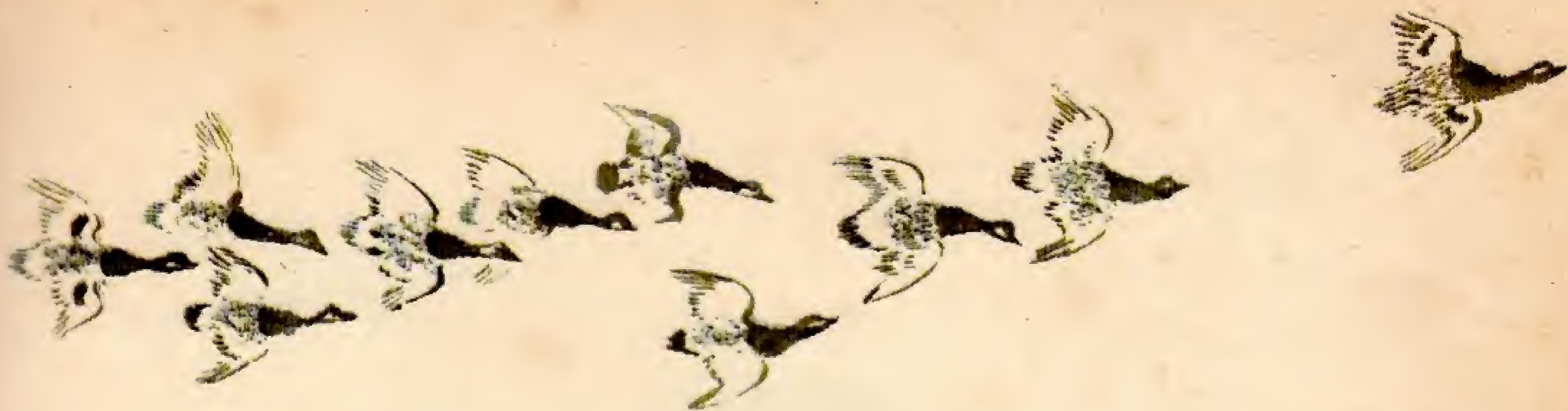
The crocodile loves to sun himself in shallow, warm water. He lies very still, his toothy mouth closed, and his tail, which has a comb-like strip running down the centre, never stirring. At a glance you'd think this was just a snag rotting in the water, and not a live beast.

He is waiting for his lunch. Just let a zebra or an antelope come to water! He'll quickly knock his victim down with his strong tail, get hold of it with his sharp teeth, and drag it down to the bottom of the river.









WALRUS

The walrus is like a great leather bag filled with fat.

He has a bristly moustache and two long tusks. His legs end in fins, not feet, and he uses them like oars.

He dives deep into the water and grazes on the sea floor just as a cow grazes in a meadow. He eats seaweed, searches for shellfish, and when he has eaten his fill he surfaces, heaves himself up by thrusting his tusks into the shore or the edge of an ice-floe, climbs out of the water and lies down on the stones to get rested.



POLAR BEAR

The polar bear is a tramp by nature. His thick fur does not get wet through, and his coat is so warm that he does not care how hard the frost, how angry the snowstorm, or how icy the water.

He tramps over the ice and snow looking for food. When he catches a fish or a young walrus, he quickly eats it and drops off to sleep at once, right there on the ice. After his sleep he feels hungry again, and sets off once more, watching and sniffing for something to catch and stuff himself with.

The polar bear is a fast runner, quick diver and good swimmer. And so he never goes hungry for long, he'll always find something to eat.





RHINOCEROS

Trees tremble and sway, their branches snap with a crackle as the rhinoceros tears on blindly through the jungle. Prickles, thorns, tree stumps and hard boughs cannot hurt him. His skin is as thick and strong as armour: a spear will glance off it, and an arrow will break. Only a bullet fired from a rifle can pierce his hide.

The rhino has a big upright horn on his snout, and very small eyes with which he can't see well. He never stops to think, and starts butting whoever there is at once.

He's a very hot-tempered, mistrustful beast.



REINDEER

In the Far North, the summer is a very, very short season, and the rest of the time there's snow and ice. Neither a cow nor a horse can be kept there, for there's no hay for them to eat in winter. Only the reindeer can live there. He digs into the snow with his hoofs and gets himself some Iceland moss to eat.

Who gives people milk and meat in the Far North? The reindeer.

Who draws their sleighs? The reindeer.

People could not live in the Far North if there were no reindeer.









IN THE WOODS

BADGER

When spring comes and the snow melts away, the badger crawls out of his nice, dry burrow. He isn't quite awake yet. Like the bear, he has slept the whole winter through. The fur on his sides has become matted. He's a wheezy, weak-sighted, shaggy animal. Now he takes a big stretch and smooths himself out.

He hunts frogs and scratches for beetles in the moss under the tree roots. Once he has finished eating and drinking he goes back home to his burrow.





SQUIRREL

Mushrooms are a nice change from cones, and when the squirrel feels like having one it hops down the branches and twigs to the ground below.

Squirrel dear, do you know how to tell the good mushrooms from the bad? Anyway, mind you don't eat those handsome red mushrooms with white dots on the cap! The fly agaric they are called, and they are very poisonous.





CRANE

The crane likes to sleep on a mossy hummock in the marsh, and when he awakens he smooths down his feathers with his beak and cries out at the top of his voice: Cru-u-u! Cru-u-u!

He flies to where the peas have ripened and pecks at a few. They're lovely for breakfast! After that he flies to the river for a drink of water and a look at his reflection. My, isn't he handsome! All in grey, his legs so long, and his neck so thin! He stretches out his wings and does a little dance, tapping his feet, twisting and turning, preening before the mirror-like surface of the water.



WILD BOAR

The wild boar runs about the woods grunting and snorting, picking up acorns, digging in the ground with his long snout, and tearing up the roots with his curved tusks in search of food.

With his sharp, strong tusks he can undercut a tree or kill a wolf. The bear himself is afraid of the wild boar.





LYNX

This wild cat is as tall as a big dog. It has a short tail, tufted ears, and its tawny fur is spotted. In the dark forest, the lynx lies still on a thick bough close to a path, and waits, ready to pounce on its prey.





BEAR

The bear has a sweet tooth, and here he is, eating raspberries. He champs, smacks his lips, and purrs with pleasure. He does not pick the berries one by one, but licks the whole shrub clean.

My, aren't you a greedy bear? A glutton, that's what you are. Mind you don't get a tummyache from overeating.









FOX

In winter the fox hunts field mice. Here he has climbed up on a stump to see further afield, and is watching and listening hard for the slightest movement or squeak of a mouse under snow.

He will attack at once. The mice have little chance against this red, fluffy hunter.

HARE

The hare's fur coat is very, very warm, and very, very white, and protecting it from both the frost and the hunter. You can't see him against the snow, and while you're wondering and making up your mind he'll be off and away.

In winter the hare has to eat the bitter bark he skins off shrubs. In summer there is food galore! There's the sweet clover, timothy grass, and lots of flowers with honey in them.

So please, leave our kitchen garden alone, don't nibble at our cabbages and our carrots!





OWL

The owl has soft feathers and its wings do not make a sound. It has sharp, curved claws, and once it gets a mouse, a squirrel or a sleepy bird into its clutches, there is no escape for the victim. The owl hunts at night, and sleeps in the daytime.

Two tomtits were darting among the branches in the wood, and suddenly they saw an owl. They screamed and cried: "Get together, everybody! There he is, the goggle-eyed robber, there he is!"

HEDGEHOG

Children, mushroom-picking in the woods, found a hedgehog under a bush. He had curled up into a ball from fright, and was so prickly that the children could not touch him with their bare hands. Then they rolled him into the hat one of them had worn, and carried him home. They set him down on the kitchen floor and put a saucer of milk before him.

The hedgehog lay curled up into a ball and did not stir.

He lay like that for an hour and more.

At last the point of his black snout appeared from the spikes, and twitched. M-mm, smells nice! He straightened out and lapped the milk, and when he'd had enough he curled up again.

In the meantime, the children got busy with something else and the hedgehog, left unguarded, ran back to the woods.

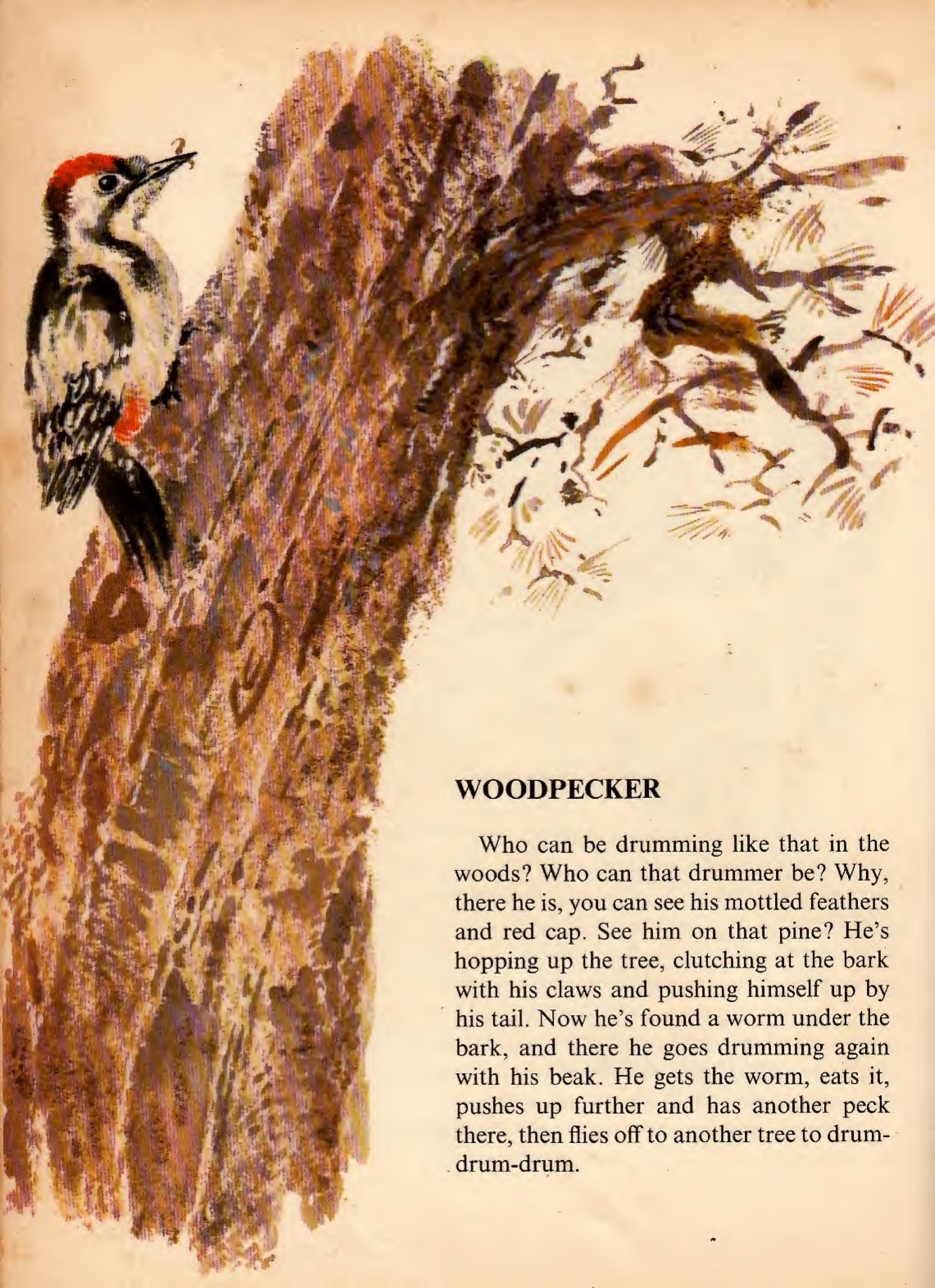




ADDER

The sun was getting nice and hot, and the adder crawled out from under the cold roots and the cold moss to sprawl on a warm tree stump. This snake has poisonous teeth, it kills its prey with a bite and swallows the dead thing.

Children, don't run barefoot in the woods because you might get bitten by an adder and be ill in bed for a very long time.



WOODPECKER

Who can be drumming like that in the woods? Who can that drummer be? Why, there he is, you can see his mottled feathers and red cap. See him on that pine? He's hopping up the tree, clutching at the bark with his claws and pushing himself up by his tail. Now he's found a worm under the bark, and there he goes drumming again with his beak. He gets the worm, eats it, pushes up further and has another peck there, then flies off to another tree to drum-drum-drum.

BLACK GROUSE

This is a really handsome bird. He is almost entirely black with bright red "eyebrows", and his short legs are covered with feathers as if he is wearing fluffy fur boots to keep his feet warm.

In winter, the black grouse sits on a birch, pecking at the catkins, and when bedtime comes he simply flops head down into the snow, where he wiggles a bit to make a hollow to fit him, and goes to sleep in it for the whole night. In spring, the black grouse gather in the forest clearings for mating time. They jump at one another, fight, and sing for all they are worth.



WOLF

Danger! Danger! Everybody is in danger—the lambs and the sheep, the pigs, the calves and the cows, the foals and the horses.

The wolf is on the prowl.

The village dogs begin to bark in anger and alarm.

The farm watchman loads his rifle.

It's the wolf who is in danger now!







IN OUR YARD







DOG

Sharik's coat is so thick and warm that he lives out of doors, winter and summer. There's no heating in his kennel, just some straw bedding. Sharik is the collective-farm watchdog, and his job is to see that no thieves get in. The farmers are very fond of him, and give him the nicest things to eat.

CAT

Pussy caught a mouse in the cellar, and for this her mistress gave her some cream. And here is Pussy sitting on her little rug, purring with pleasure. Baby kitten does not think it's much fun to just sit and purr; and so he plays a game of his own—twisting to catch his own tail, hissing, glaring and bristling at imaginary enemies.





RABBIT

This is a mother rabbit with her twins. They have long ears, bobbed tails, round eyes, and they eat grass like their mother does. They are like her in everything. Watch that young rabbit eating a blade of grass: his whole face is working, his nose twitches, and the blade of grass gradually disappears in his mouth. He'll finish this one before starting on another.

I'll go and bring them each a carrot, a cabbage leaf, and a crust of bread to chew on.



PIG

Look at this beauty, she really is a dirty pig, wallowing in the mud and bathing in a puddle!

“Be a good girl, go down to the river and wash the dirt off your snout and your sides. You won’t? Then run to the pigsty, they’ll give you a good scrubbing there and you’ll be fresh as a daisy!”

“Grunt-grunt, I don’t want to be a daisy.”





CAMEL

He has been carrying heavy bales on his hump for long distances across the steppe, and now at long last they have brought him home. He is terribly tired, and he has lost a lot of flesh. He is resting, with his legs drawn up, slowly munching hay and straw. Mind you don't tease him now, or he'll get angry and spit at you.



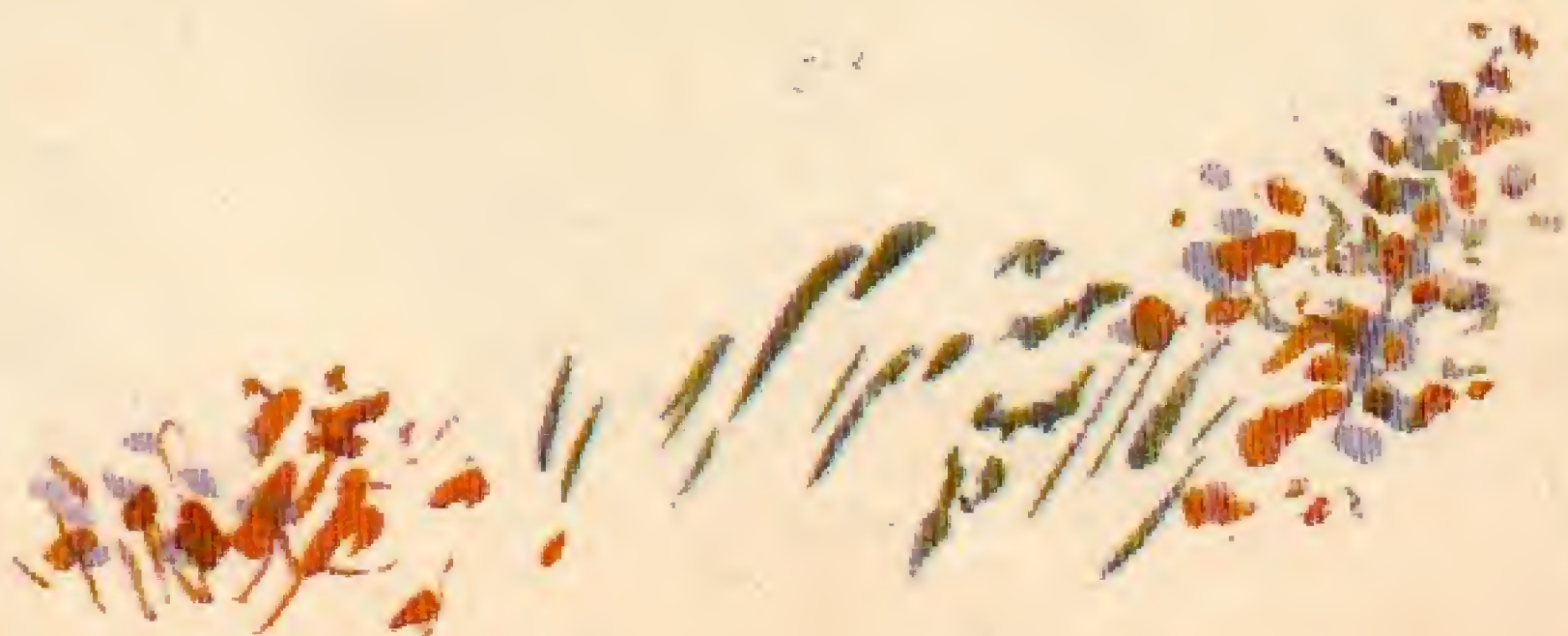




COW

That's our cow standing in the middle of the green meadow, chewing the cud. She has curved horns, big sides, and her udder's full of milk.

"Tell us, what do you like to eat best? Plain green grass or pretty flowers? Would you like a daisy, a cornflower, a forget-me-not, a clove pink or perhaps a bluebell? You must eat the best, and your milk will be all the sweeter. The milkmaid is coming to milk you soon. Will you give us a full pail of lovely, sweet milk?"





DUCK

The duck dives and swims about the pond all day, cleaning and smoothing down her feathers with her bill. Now and again she takes a look at herself in the water, and quacks: "Aren't I beautiful! Quack."





HEN

The hen was walking about the yard with her brood, and suddenly it began to rain. Quickly she squatted on the ground, stood up all her feathers, and clucked, telling her chicks to come and hide. They came running to take cover under their mother's wings, and huddled in her warm feathers. There wasn't room for all of them: one chick's legs were left outside, and another had his head poking out.

Two naughty chicks did not come when their mother called, and now they stood shivering in the rain, wondering what was hitting them on the head!

HORSE

This is a young horse. He runs freely about the meadows, neighing happily and hoofing the ground. He has never been saddled yet or harnessed into a cart. His home is the collective farm where he is being reared for his future master, a Soviet army commander. Lucky for the young horse, because he won't have to haul a heavy cart, but will carry his master into attack, leading the charge.







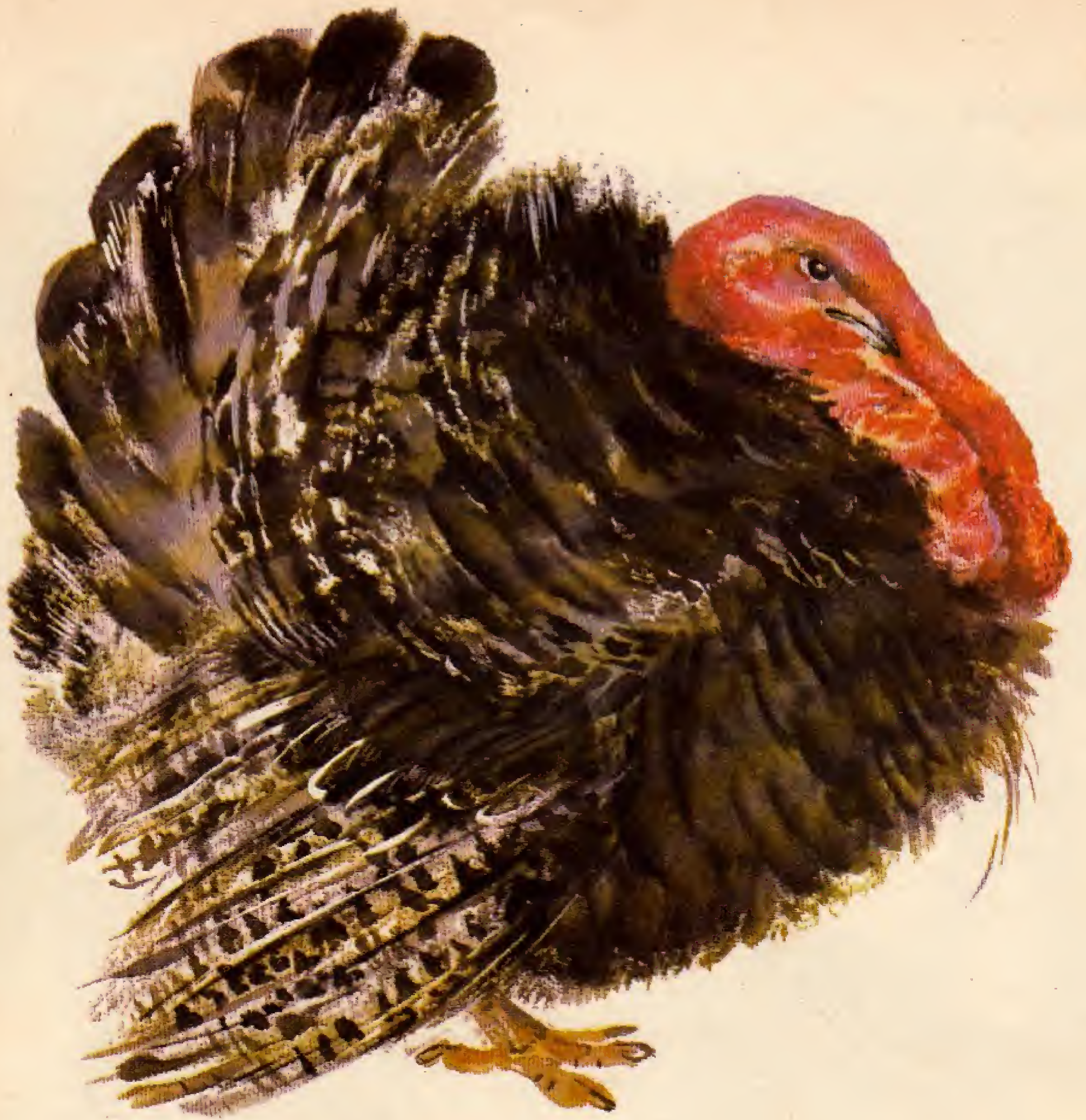
SHEEP

This is not a common sheep, it is of a very good breed. The wool is thick and very fine, good for knitting mittens, sweaters and socks. All our clothes can be made from this wool, felt boots too. The collective farm owns a whole flock of these sheep.

NANNY GOAT

She's hurrying home along the village street knowing that dinner will be ready and waiting for her. But if the mistress doesn't look sharp, the nanny goat will take care of herself: she'll nibble at the broom in the kitchen, pinch a piece of bread, have a go at the sprouts in the kitchen garden, or bark an apple tree in the garden. The mischief she makes! But she does have lovely milk, and I dare say I prefer it to cow milk.





TURKEY

The turkey struts about the yard, all puffed up and angry at everybody. He drags his wings along the ground and fans out his tail. Children will tease him sometimes, and then he puffs up even more and goes gabble-gabble-gabble.

GOOSE

He's had his swim, and now he wants his breakfast.

Goosie, goosie, if you're good
I shall give you some nice food,
Soft white bread and seeds galore,
Just don't pinch me any more!



DONKEY

To keep the donkey happy they have tethered him among the burdock which is his favourite food. He has eaten up all the burdock around him, but the best of it is out of his reach as his rope is too short.

He starts screaming in his nasty, loud voice that can be heard five miles away, calling his master to come and move his darling donkey nearer.





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